

## SOME PROBLEMS IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Constance C. Fisher

The business of human relations involves all the possible relationship one individual or group has with another. It begins in the prenatal stage and ends in the grave. It is not too far afield, then, to turn back into the home first to find the key to what present-day problems in these relationships are, between majorities and minorities of all sort in general, and especially between those of Caucasians and those of color. We know that the home is the world in miniature. Since no two individuals are actually ever completely alike, we have then within the home the same potentialities for stress, tension, and friction, as exist in the larger, less intimate world. The difference is that we have them at their source. We expect that the child will be taught, in this miniature world, to meet life's joys and sorrows, to respect other people's personalities and rights, to share and shoulder responsibility, to give and take fairly, to tolerate, to understand, to be just, to be humble, to love. He rubs off his first hostilities towards his parents and his siblings, and he gets his first training in ethics and precepts there. He is born a bunch of potentialities and is taught and absorbs whatever the attitudes and atmosphere in the home are. We expect that normally he will be loved by small world, and be given affection and understanding; be given good training, and taught how and permitted to become an independent and adequate person. We know too that if he has had these, he likely to be a more secure person, better able to meet the demands put upon him when he ventures out into the larger world, peopled by those so different from, yet so like him and his first small world. If he has been denied these, his adjustment is likely to be so much less easy and good. It is quite easy, then, for him to find many grievances against other and wrongs done to him by some "scapegoat". For one "scapegoat" may be a religious, or a political, or a social group; for another is the rich or the poor; while others choose the "yellow-bellies", the "niggers", "dirty Jews", etc., ad infinitum. In some respects some of this scapegoating is a natural competitive device applied to and by all peoples. But perhaps the most vicious of them all is the type which chooses the color of a man's skin as the reason for its ill-treatment of him. In his terrific need to prove himself "superior" (or even adequate to himself) he forgets that he is what he is only by the accident of birth and not because of any choice or superior ability on his part.

Take, for example, the relationship between the whites of America, and the Negroes here. In the very early stages of their lives neither has any knowledge of the things we call prejudice, until he is taught it. Sometimes it is done in that world, sometimes just outside of it, but it is teaching that does it (by word or action). Too often the white child is told, when raises his first questions innocently, about color differences, that "that is a Nigger. He is black". And somehow the idea is gotten across that black is evil. Other terms just as opprobrious are often used — darkey, coon, smoke, dusty, pickaninny. And the Negro too often answers his by saying "that's a peckerwood", or "poor white trash". The white tells his youngster to "push him off the sidewalk", and the Negro tells his, defensively, to "knock his block off if he bothers you". And so it goes. There is a great deal of differences between the motivation behind the question of the little 5 years old boy who asks "are you brown all over?" And the little girl who says "Hello! Are you a Nigger?" and answers the question immediately herself by saying "yes

you are, yes you are; my Mommy says all black folks are Niggers". When these children read their books, go to the theatre, listen to the radio, see cartoons, go to school and see the pictures in their geographies and histories, listen to their parents, relatives, or friends talk, there is always presented to them a stereotype of the Negro, which usually is to the ridicule or discredit of him. More often than not he is portrayed as the criminal, the thief, the "big burley black brute", the fool, the ignorant servant, and always with "dialect" of a sort, and with a very black face, a big grey, red, or white mouth, and big white eyes that must always roll. One is forced to wonder often if the white man has ever really looked at a group of Negroes, or if these stereotypes are the result of a bad dream that left him blinded.

And what of the devices so often used to make the Negro lose his selfrespect, to punish him for daring to have the same wants, desires, needs, and ambitions as the whites? These include general segregation, ghetto housing, the Jim Crow system, inequalities in public education, in job opportunities, inequalities before the law, lynching, peonage. How does it feel, for example, to purchase a cold drink at a public soda fountain and see the clerk smash the glass you drank from? Or what would be your reaction when you went to buy a dress or suit and could not fit it on first? Or how would you like to be told that you could buy a hat but could not try it on unless the crown was first stuffed with tissue paper? What happen inside to the youngster just out of high school in search of a job, when he sees himself the only one of his class unable to get a job because of the color-badger he wears? What of the Lidices in some Negro communities of the South? I say Lidice because there is very little difference between doing it the Nazi way and doing it by lynching, followed by terrorizing the total community, (killing many others), ending by burning everything possible, leaving only a mass of lost hopes, burnt ambition, and ashes. What must be in the mind of the Negro when he sees a sign "No Niggers or Dogs Allowed" over the entrance to a park? And a thousand others of similar nature.

Our relationships with the Nisei, the Mexican, the Indian, and others of color are not much better. We seem to have a great need to ridicule others, for every "scapegoat" is immediately named something that carries with it a stigma. These astigmatizing nicknames have no place in decent human relations. Anything that is done to make another think or feel less of himself boomerangs. Our relationships are like pebbles thrown into a pool, making ripples that spread into ever widening circles, covering more and more space and touching more and more people. Man must somehow come to know that until he learn to love his neighbors as himself, and to "do unto others whatsoever—" he would have them do him — not because they are white, or black, or yellow, or red, but because they are his brothers and neighbors he can never expect to have peace in his larger world. He may talk glibly of "neighbor", "brother", "peace", and "love" many times over, but they remain empty words unless they are vitalized by the spirit of human kindness and the principles of Christian living. There are many who believe in such vitality and principles, and practice them; but there must be more if utter chaos is not to come.

As one of three American women delegates to a European-American Commission, WSCF, once I sat through a certain most stimulating discussion on student Christian relationships. I felt that those present had firm convictions and had put the best they had into the whole

series. As the closing prayer was being said, in the dead silence of the room, I found myself strangely impelled to open my eyes to see the faces of those about me. I was struck with awe at what I saw! Then came the tremendous urge to sing out in the words of the Spiritual,

Oh, I believe this is Jesus,  
Come and see, come and see!  
Oh, I believe this is Jesus,  
Come and see, come and see.  
The Light of God shines in his face —  
Come and see, come and see."

Until one man is able to look into the face of another and see that Light first (instead of color, race, or creed) because that is what he wants to see, there can be no lasting, satisfying, peaceful, personal, social, national, or international relationships. If he has not learned how, in his smaller family and group circles to respect and live with human personalities, he cannot suddenly know to do it on a world-wide basis. (All human relations then stem from the individual). See that he learns at home to "do unto others whatsoever ye would that men do unto you."

## GEORGE!

James D. Evanson

"Fifteen minutes after eight. Heavens to Betsy! We have to stand in this line till nine o'clock. I don't think there is anything more boring than standing in waiting lines . . . George, why on earth do you insist upon bringing me to this sort of thing . . . Of course, George! I know you did it because I suggested it. That's what makes you such a bore, George, never any originality. Just because I ask you to take me to a movie doesn't mean you have to take me to a movie, — men are such stupid creatures.

"Oh, there's Phyllis McCall, George. He-l-l-o, Phyllis, you darling creature. How simply devastating you look! — and after all you've been through, too. You-you poor dear; you know-you know the girls at the club told me what a dreadful experience this Clarence of yours has been. Strictly on the Q. T., Lola told me yesterday that Jeannie had seen him in the Pelican Club Saturday night with that horrible Sally Finch, and, well . . . Please, George, do stand still! . . . Oh no Phyllis, you're not leaving! Going to the Flame Room? I don't blame you, really; I simply know this movie if going to be such a bore, but this George of mine can be so insistent. Say, Clarence is going to be at the Flame Room tonight, isn't he? You didn't! . . . Well, g'by, darling. I simply must have a long heart-to-heart talk with you, but soon. Call me. Good Bye-eee!"

"Hm . . . the Flame Room::: George, don't you think the Flame Room is a lovely spot? So interesting. You meet all the best people there, you know . . . George! Don't be so insulting! I won't have you calling my best friends snobs. Please! Will you stand still, George?"

"(The Flame Room . . . if I were only certain :::) George, it's so hot here, simply unbearable. What time is it . . . Oh, my goodness! And I simply don't see how I can stand another five minutes. I really mean it . . . George, would you like to go to the Flame Room? Really, I'm just so positive this movie is going to be such a bore, and the actors, well, they just aren't! . . . George, you needn't use such nasty words! I'm quite aware of the fact that you suggested going to the Flame Room in the first place. And here I am, denying my own fond wishes just to please you, and that's all the gratitude you show. Oh, well, I guess that's why I just adore you so, George—you're so temperamental! Come on, let's

hurry we'll be just in time to see Senor Henriques do his last act. The girls saw him last week, and, well, Marge just raved about him. And Marge is so sophisticated, and so discriminating, don't you think? Well, George, move. Move! Honestly, you can be such a slow-poke."

"George — what was the name of this movie?"

## BALTS A PUZZLE FOR UNRRA

Esthonians, Lithuanians and Latvians Won't Pass "Iron Curtain"

by GAULT MacGOWAN

UNRRA Headquarters in Germany, June 9 (Via Air Mail) — What is to happen to the 185,000 refugee Latvians, Lithuanians and Esthonians who, when their countries were absorbed in the Soviet Union, fled west in fear of life behind the "Iron Curtain," and don't want to go home till their countries are free again?

They still have faith that the three once-independent republics will be independent once more in their lifetime, but from the allied viewpoint today their nationalities are absorbed in the general name of Balts. They are folk without a country. But no one has yet offered a practical solution for their future.

Hope that they may one day regain their independence—conceded to them after World War I and centuries of oppression—blazes in their patriotic hearts. In exile they sing their national songs, play their native airs and music, and don their national costumes on holidays, while young men and women join together in traditional folk dances.

They are fine-looking people; many of Viking stock; handsome sturdy men and graceful, good-looking women, who talk democracy to you and the Four Freedoms. In their schools, which they have organized for themselves in their little communities scattered through the three Western zones, they teach their art, their literature and their language.

## Have Fine Reputation

Unlike some of the groups being cared for UNRRA personnel, the Balts have not earned a reputation as "troublesome." Their communities are regarded as models of cleanliness.

According to Edward A. Reich of 84 William Street, New York City, executive assistant to Liet. Gen. Sir Frederick E. Morgan, chief of UNRRA in Germany, "the Balts would make good citizens of any country that promised them shelter and employment."

Buffalo Bill thought to highly of the Balts that he once tried to get a colony of Lithuanians to settle on land he owned out West. Lately, the British have been exploring a plan to recruit Estonians as domestic servants to solve the household help problem in England.

Formerly about 30,000 Lithuanians a year went to the United States. These people here, however, could not start moving to America until they had found friends or relatives to vouch for them and indorse the necessary papers, and few of these people had thought of emigration before the war. They were happy and contented at home.

## Plan to Keep Together

Balts to whom I talked were not talking in terms of individual immigration possibilities to new countries. They want to stay together in a group in the hope that one day they may be able to return home in a group. But they will not go back to life behind the "Iron Curtain" and there is no way we can oblige them to do so. They have the status of political refugees.

Their status blocks the proposal to let the Balt loose